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ABSTRACT

Intended as a guide for public library board members of the state of North Dakota, this manual provides basic information that all trustees should have and suggestions that will help them become more active and useful not only to their library and community but also to libraries and library services in the state. Subjects covered include goals, responsibilities of the board, its organization, library board and librarian relationships (in which context the responsibilities of both are enumerated), library policy manual with suggested contents, orientation of the board, friends of the library and bequests (with suggested activities and forms), and trustees and the legislative process (with lobbying guidelines). Appendices contain a checklist of questions concerning public library services that could be used for evaluation, a library bill of rights (after the Council of the American Library Association), sample trustee by-laws, and suggested further readings. (JD)

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North Dakota
Public Library Trustee Manual

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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PREFACE

This manual was prepared by the Trustee's Section of the North Dakota Library Association. The purpose of the manual is to serve as a guide for the public library board members of the state of North Dakota. It includes basic information that every North Dakota public library trustee should have and suggestions that will help them become more active, creative members of real value not only to their library and community but to libraries and library services in the state. The purpose of this document is to provide direction and challenge to those who serve the community and the state in providing library services to all.

Ideas and excerpts have been used from the 1976 North Dakota Public Library Trustees Manual and library trustees manuals from several other states.

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GOALS

The goal of the library is to provide services to meet the needs and desires of the community from an organized collection of library materials administered by a competent staff willing to give good service.

The library trustee will work to help insure the providing of library services and materials as the needs of the community dictate.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

To fulfill these goals, the Board should:

- identify these needs
- hire a competent librarian to help fill these needs
- provide the library with adequate funding for support
- determine policies to govern the services of the library
- provide guidance in budget preparation
- broaden their perspective and knowledge by attending local, regional, state and national meetings and workshops
- in hiring, comply with the affirmative action demands of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Opportunity Act of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and the local regulations defining equal employment opportunities as they apply to your library
- keep minutes, financial records and other official records of the library as public records at the library where they may be accessible to all
- hire only the most highly qualified staff available regardless of parochial pressures that may be exerted on the Board

- support the decisions of the entire Board both privately and publicly

- work to maintain a uniform publicity program in order that a dimension of solidarity be presented by the Board.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

Attention to by-laws should aide in providing a general structure to facilitate the orderly attainment of the goals of the library. The agenda of each meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting should be in the hands of the trustee prior to the meetings.

A suggested order of business:

Call to order
Record members present, absent, guests
Approval of minutes of previous meeting
Correspondence and communications
Financial report, approval of expenditures
Librarian's report
Report of committees
Unfinished business
New business
Setting of time, date and place for next meeting
Adjournment

To facilitate orderly responsibility each member of the Board should be assigned an individual area of interest such as the following:

- library law
- funding
- public relations
- library services

LIBRARY BOARD AND LIBRARIAN RELATIONSHIPS

To delineate the responsibilities of the Library Board and the Librarian, the following should be considered:

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES:

- employ a competent and qualified librarian
- determine and adopt governing policies for library programs and operation
- determine purposes of the library and secure adequate funds
- know the program and needs of the library in relation to the community; keep abreast of standards and library trends; plan and carry out the library program
- establish, support and participate in a planned public relations program
- assist in the preparation of the annual budget
- know local and state laws; actively support library legislation in the state and nation
- attend all board meetings and see that accurate records are kept on file at the library
- be aware of the services of the State Library

- attend regional, state and national trustee meetings and workshops and affiliate with the appropriate professional organizations

- report regularly to the governing officials and the general public.

LIBRARIAN'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

- act as a technical advisor to the Board; recommend needed policies for Board action; recommend employment of all personnel and supervise their work

- carry out the policies of the library as adopted by the Board

- suggest and carry out plans for extending the library's services

- prepare regular reports embodying the library's current progress and future needs; cooperate with the Board to plan and carry out the library program

- maintain an active program of public relations

- prepare an annual budget for the library in consultation with the Board and give a current report of expenditures against the budget at each meeting

- know local and state laws; actively support library legislation in the state and nation

- select and order all books and other library materials

- attend all Board meetings other than those in which his/her own salary or tenure are under discussion; may serve as secretary of the Board

- affiliate with the state and national professional organizations and attend professional meetings and workshops

- make use of the services and consultants of the State Library

- report regularly to the Library Board, to the officials of local government and to the general public.

The selection of a competent administrative librarian is the most important duty of the Board. Trustees of a small library have a difficult time filling this post. Factors to be considered in making this selection are: education and professional training, previous experience, personality, character and special abilities, and the relation of these qualifications to the library's needs and resources.

THE BOARD SHOULD:

- decide on a salary range for the position based on the library budget appropriation and on education and experience of the applicant

- obtain assistance in seeking qualified applicants from the State Librarian, recognized library schools and professional organizations and their publications

- check references given by applicants and evaluate the information gathered

- arrange for personal interviews if possible and pay all or part of applicant's travel expenses

- be aware of current practices in the library field concerning competitive salaries, length of vacations, retirement and other benefits. Also check with the State Librarian on comparable positions in local and state government

- make a salary offer appropriate to the applicant's qualifications and the library's needs

- when the Board has made a first choice, a letter should be sent without delay notifying the applicant of his selection. A reply by wire or letter may be requested.

When possible, employee benefits, salaries and job descriptions should be an integral part of, or at least compatible with the benefits, salaries and job description of other employees of the local government unit.

SUGGESTED CONTENTS OF THE POLICY MANUAL:

- a statement of the goals and objectives of the library
- a detailed selection policy including selection priorities, the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read statement and a procedure for handling citizen complaints
- regulations for library use, including:
  - hours of service
  - loan periods and fines, if any
  - replacement of library materials
  - policy regarding the abuse of library privileges
  - acceptance or rejection of gifts
  - use of library meeting rooms
  - exhibits by organizations
- staff regulations:
  - leave: vacations, sick leave, holidays
  - travel time and expenses to library meetings, conferences, etc.
  - other fringe benefits
  - staff responsibilities, job descriptions and salary schedules.

The policy manual should be reviewed each year.

ORIENTATION OF THE BOARD

As it is with most other jobs, the job of trustee can be more effectively performed with a good orientation. Orientation for new Board members should be provided by the Board working with the librarian.

In addition to a copy of this handbook, a new trustee should receive:

- a list of board member names, addresses and telephone numbers
- a staff list including titles and responsibilities
- a tour of the library with library staff
- written policies of the library
- the library's current budget
- the by-laws of the Board
- the library's long-range plan
- the library's latest annual report
- the minutes of previous meetings of the Board.

After the new trustee has had time to see the library and study the materials, a meeting should be arranged with a committee of the Board and the head librarian. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss the library's general objectives and to answer the questions of the new trustee. The Board and librarian should at this time reassess the current and future needs of the community and how the library is meeting these needs.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY AND BEQUESTS

"Friends" are civic-minded men and women who know that a good library is central to a good community. They exist to assist the library in promoting, improving and expanding service. A Friends of the Library group should organize apart from the library and have its own by-laws, officers and organization. "Friends" groups work with the trustees and the library staff in planning activities but are not involved, except as interested citizens, in the governing of the library. Trustees may serve as liaison to the group but not usually as officers.

ACTIVITIES OF THE "FRIENDS" MAY INCLUDE:

- creating public support for expanding the library's program
- encouraging gifts, endowments and memorials
- raising funds for specific purposes
- providing assistance in purchasing special items for the library such as a special collection of books or photographs or local art
- working for library legislation and appropriations
- informing the community of library programs and needs
- campaigning for new facilities
- sponsoring special programs
- aiding the library's public relations programs.

A good Friends of the Library group can often serve as a training ground for future trustees. Friends can provide the wide community base essential to the library's success.

For further information:

> "Friends of the Library: organization and activities". Ruth M. White, editor. American Library Association, 50 East Huron, Chicago, Illinois 60611. $2.50.

FORMS FOR WILLS AND BEQUESTS:

I give and bequeath to the ..... Public Library of ....., North Dakota, the sum of ..... dollars ($.) in trust, however, for the uses and purposes following, to wit: to hold, manage, control, invest and reinvest the same and out of the income thereof the Trustees are to use the proceeds therefrom for the general purposes of the library.

OR:

I give, devise and bequeath to the ..... Public Library of ....., North Dakota, the sum of ..... dollars ($.) in cash (or, the following described property, to wit: .....) to be used for the general purposes of said library.

OR:

I give and bequeath to the ..... Public Library of ....., North Dakota, the sum of ..... dollars ($.) (or, the following described property, to wit .....) to be used at the discretion of the Trustees of said library.

TRUSTEES AND THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

It is essential for trustees to obtain a knowledge of the political process. Trustees in a way are kin to politicians in that both are public officials seeking and accepting responsibility for public institutions and funds. It is important for trustees to understand the layers of control with which the Board must work. In North Dakota these layers include municipal, county and state officials who have certain powers through which libraries gain financial support. Trustees need to cultivate frank, open relationships with these officials, working with them to produce the best possible climate for libraries.

The process of expressing opinions to the decision makers and pushing in support of one's opinions, is called "lobbying." Effective lobbying can be accomplished in various ways. These are some guidelines:

- initiate frequent informal visits with elected officials
- supply officials with written communications that clearly relate facts about library issues
- attend party precinct caucuses and provide information on library services
- attend candidate forums
- give encouragement to candidates who care about library programs
- work with the North Dakota Library Association Legislative Committee
- invite elected representatives and local officials to a "question and answer" session with your local Board

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- write letters to elected officials which are complete, clear, concise, correct and courteous; use the official designation for a Bill and refer to its title or content to identify it
- lastly, when your goal is achieved and you have what you need for now, remember to say "thank you" to the officials who supported you.

If you, as a trustee, see lobbying as a continuous information process for aiding elected officials, as well as a right of every citizen to be heard and express an opinion, you will be comfortable with the political process and develop skill in lobbying that will benefit all libraries and the public they serve.

APPENDIX I

CHECKLIST: "PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES"

Please answer the following questions on the library services now available in your community. This is only for your information and evaluation.

1. Does the public library serve all parts of the community -- geographic, economic, educational, occupational, religious, etc.?

2. Does the library assist community organizations by helping to plan programs, provide speakers from the staff and board, prepare booklists or arrange exhibits?

3. Are there children's story hours and reading programs?

4. Are there timely exhibits and displays in the library?

5. Does the librarian borrow through inter-library loans to supply informational needs not covered by the book stock?

6. Is service extended outside the library to hospitals, shut-ins, prisons, handicapped persons, the aged, unemployed, school dropouts, culturally disadvantaged, underprivileged?

7. Does the community know of library service through regular and frequent use of newspapers, radio, TV, direct

telephone contact, exhibits outside the library and other publicity?

8. Is there a community-wide observance of National Library Week and Children's Book Week?

9. Are the monthly and annual reports made the subjects of news stories in local papers?

10. Does the public library maintain close relations with other libraries of the community, e.g., school, church, college, business libraries?

11. Does the library have a program of service for adults and young people which includes instruction in the use of books and libraries?

12. Does the library provide individual reading guidance?

13. Does the library maintain a list of community organizations?

14. Does the library sponsor programs such as discussion groups, film forums, booktalks, reading programs, music appreciation, art classes, etc.?

15. Is there a continuing program to reach out to previously unserved persons?

16. Does the library cooperate with private and governmental agencies (federal, state and local) in the community educational and anti-poverty efforts such as Work-Study, Work-Training, Job Corps, Head-Start, etc.?

17. Does the library cooperate with community action and other local agencies on special programs and projects such as study centers, urban renewal, teaching illiterates, etc.?

18. List as much of the general make-up of the community as you can in five minutes with regard to age, educational level, nationality, occupation, special interest, etc.

19. List as many as you can in five minutes - The names of clubs, organizations, agencies, recreational groups, civic and service groups in your community.

20. Does the library maintain a friendly inviting atmosphere?

APPENDIX II

LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The Council of the American Library Association reaffirms its belief in the following basic policies which should govern the services of all libraries:

1. As a responsibility of library service, books and other library materials selected should be chosen for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all the people of the community. In no case should library materials be excluded because of the race or nationality or the social, political, or religious views of the authors.

2. Libraries should provide books and other materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times; no library materials should be proscribed or removed from libraries because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

3. Censorship should be challenged by libraries in the maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information and enlightenment.

4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

5. The rights of an individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of age, race, religion, national origins or social or political views.

6. As an institution of education for democratic living, the library should welcome the use of its meeting rooms for socially useful and cultural activities and discussion of current public questions. Such meeting places should be available on equal terms to all groups in the community regardless of the beliefs and affiliations of their members, provided that the meetings be open to the public.

APPENDIX III

SAMPLE TRUSTEE BY-LAWS

MEETINGS:

The regular monthly meeting of the Library Board shall be held at the library at a time to be determined by the members each year. The annual meeting shall be held at the time of the regular monthly meeting for the month of ..... at the usual place.

Special meetings may be called by the president of the Board, or upon written request of .... members for the transaction of business stated in the call for the meeting.

Notice of all meetings shall be sent at least .... days in advance.

OFFICERS:

Officers of the Board shall be chosen at the regular annual meeting of the Board, and shall be as follows: president, vice-president, and secretary.

An officer may succeed himself provided, however, that a president shall not serve more than three consecutive terms.

The president shall preside at all meetings, appoint all committees, authorize calls for any special meetings, and generally perform the duties of a presiding officer.

The vice-president shall preside in the absence of the president.

The secretary shall keep a true and accurate account of all proceedings of the Board meetings, and shall certify all bills approved by the Board. (Or the librarian may be designated "as executive secretary to keep true and accurate account..." the librarian has no vote on the Board.)

QUORUM:

A quorum for the transaction of Library Board business shall consist of a simple majority of the Board.

COMMITTEES:

Special committees for the study and investigation of special problems may be appointed by the president, such committees to serve until completion of the work for which they were appointed.

AMENDMENTS:

These by-laws may be amended by a unanimous vote at any regular meeting of the Board with a quorum present, providing the amendment was stated in the call for the meeting.

These by-laws will be in force upon adoption by the Library Board of the .....
Library on the ..... day of .....

APPENDIX IV

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING:

Young, Virginia G. editor. The Library Trustee: A Practical Guidebook; a second edition. R. R. Bowker, New York, 1969. 242p. $8.25.

This book contains much practical information on policies, by-laws, budget and finance, and has essays on practically all phases of a library board's responsibilities and interests.

The Public Library Trustee: Image and Performance on Funding. Metuchen, N.J., Scarecrow Press, 1973. 176p.

North Dakota Library Law. Bismarck, N.D., State Library Commission, 1977. 20p.